

REMARKS

Re-examination and allowance of the present application is respectfully requested.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 8, 9 and 11-15 contain allowable subject matter that these claims would be allowable if they are amended to be placed in independent form. By the current amendment, Applicant has amended claims 8 and 11-15 to place them in independent form, including substantially all the limitations of their respective base claim and intervening claims. In this regard, Applicant notes that claim 9 depends from claim 8, which has now been placed into independent form.

In view of the current amendment, Applicant submits that claims 8, 9 and 11-15 are allowable over the applied art of record, and respectfully requests such an indication by the Examiner.

In order to advance the prosecution of the instant application, Applicant cancels, without prejudice, claims 1-7, 10 and 16-22. Cancellation of these claims are not to be taken as an acquiescence of the appropriateness of the rejection, but merely as a desire to advance the prosecution to issue. In this regard, Applicant expressly reserves the right to submit claims similar to those canceled herein in another application.

In view of the cancellation of claims 1-7, 10 and 16-22, Applicant submits that the rejection set forth against these claims is moot, and thus, it is no longer necessary to respond thereto.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

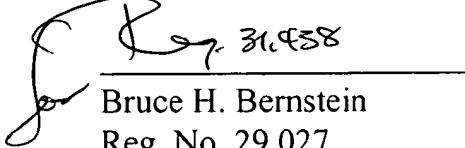
In view of the fact that the art of record, whether considered alone or in combination, fails to disclose or suggest the present invention as now defined by the pending claims, and in further view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the Examiner's action and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested and are believed to be appropriate.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should the Commissioner determine that an extension of time is required in order to render this response timely and/or complete, a formal request for an extension of time, under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a), is herewith made in an amount equal to the time period required to render this response timely and/or complete. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required extension of time fee under 37 C.F.R. §1.17 to Deposit Account No. 19-0089.

If there should be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
Tadashi HAYAKAWA

Bruce H. Bernstein
Reg. No. 29,027

March 10, 2004
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C.
1950 Roland Clarke Place
Reston, VA 20191
(703) 716-1191